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**THESIS**

**USING CREDIT VENDOR DATABASES TO  
APPREHEND  
DESERTERS**

by

**Jon V. Hitchcock**

**June, 1993**

**Thesis Advisors:**

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Using Credit Vendor Databases to  
Apprehend  
Deserters

by

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Lieutenant Commander, United States Navy  
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of the requirements for the degree of

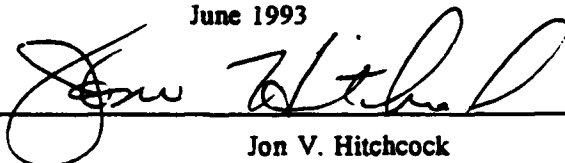
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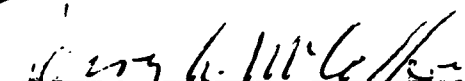
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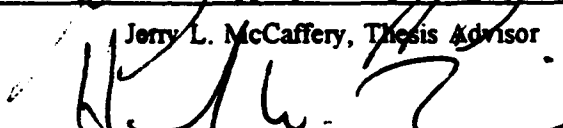
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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of this thesis is to determine if there are efficiencies to be gained by using credit vendor database address lead information in order to locate and apprehend deserters from the Department of Defense. A pilot program was performed by the U.S. Army Deserter Information Point, which used address leads supplied by three nationwide credit vendors -- CBI (Equifax), TRW, and TU (Trans Union). As a result of using this information, the Army returned to military custody one hundred thirty-five deserters, including nine of forty-six (20 percent) of the missing deserters who had additional military charges. The study determined a more effective and efficient manner of locating deserters would be to utilize address lead information from two nationwide credit vendors (CBI and TRW). Multiple credit vendor use is recommended based on the demonstrated strengths and weaknesses of the vendors in the geographical areas covered during the study.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

Even in an all volunteer service, deserters remain a problem for the military. Their skills need to be replaced and their "selective departures" have an undesirable effect on morale and performance of their unit. Consequently, laws have been passed in the United States which make desertion a criminal offense, and the military services expend resources to return deserters to military control. This study attempts to identify a more efficient and effective method of locating missing deserters and returning them to military control.

Although as shown in the chart in Appendix B [Ref. 4] the total number of deserters has declined from 22,833 in September 1981 to 6,898 in September 1991, desertion of service members remains a problem in an all-volunteer service. In addition, if at some point in the future the Department of Defense is tasked to perform duties that are not popular with a significant portion of its service members, the number of deserters may once again increase to previous levels found during the Viet Nam War era. Costs directly attributed to deserters incurred by the Department of Defense include a Deserter Information Point (DIP) established within each service that provides for control, accounting, and

distribution of information concerning members classified as deserters.[Ref. 1] Other costs such as controlling and retraining deserters, and losses from recruitment and training expenditures were delineated in a study done in 1977. Discharging deserters in absentia was also examined by that study, and it was found to be not cost effective as well as providing no deterrent effect on other military personnel considering desertion. [Ref. 2] A 1976 Air Force Military Personnel Center study calculated the fiscal year 1975 absentee and deserter costs for 6,645 offenders at \$321 per offender. These costs were based on direct costs such as salary cost per year and indirect costs that included personnel salaries managing absentee information, data management costs, and escort and travel costs.[Ref. 3] The breakdown of deserters reported to the Defense Manpower Data Center as of September 30, 1991, is as follows: Army-2810, Navy-1894, Marine Corps-1989, and Air Force-205.

In the present study information available from commercial credit vendors will be examined to find its effectiveness in locating deserters. As of January 1993, only the Navy uses a credit vendor to locate deserters and the Navy only uses one of the three national credit vendors operating in the United States. All services are required by Department of Defense Directive to make every practicable effort to apprehend absentees and deserters as expeditiously as possible. The



legality of using the credit vendor information with respect to the Fair Credit Reporting Act [Ref. 6] will be addressed.

There are three primary credit vendors in the United States. CBI, also known as Equifax, is located in Atlanta, Georgia. TRW is located in California, and Trans Union, also known as TU, is located in Chicago, Illinois. These services are accessible through tape to tape transfers or through personal computers using software available from the vendors. A description of the different types of software available, hardware requirements, and the source(s) for the software are shown in Reference 7:p. 8-10. In addition to address and name verification reports from credit vendors, specific cases may warrant a more indepth search to locate a deserter. In such cases, credit vendors also have full credit reports available if the requestor meets one of the following conditions:

1. A court order or a grand jury subpoena.

- or -

2. A signed authorization from the consumer.

- or -

3. Meeting one of the permissible purposes:

- a. Credit related matter.
- b. Employment purposes.
- c. Underwriting insurance.
- d. Determining eligibility for license/benefit.
- e. Relevant business transactions.

[Ref. 6:p. 1054]

Full credit reports list the firms with whom the individual has open credit accounts and has recently applied for credit. This permits the holder to those contact sources to find out more information about the recent activities of the person in question. This could be useful in locating a deserter if, for example, the deserter applied for credit at a department store and the information on the store's credit application gives more timely address and employer information on the subject.

In addition to the credit vendors dealt with in this study, there are numerous other sources of information that may be useful for locating individuals. These services are available at a wide range of costs. The databases vary in size and criteria. The sources for information used by these commercial databases are sources such as, but not limited to, telephone listings, utility company customer listings, census results, warranty card registration, and real estate ownership. A listing of many of those commercial databases, their availability, and a general description of their content can be found in Reference 7.

It will be shown that by using a method of locating deserters not currently in widespread use, the Department of Defense could return to military control a greater number of its deserters with minimal cost. The utility of this approach is assessed through use of a pilot test during which the

proposed method was actually used to locate deserters from the U.S. Army.

## **B. OBJECTIVE**

The purpose of this study is to determine the utility of using credit vendor data to help locate deserters. In order to accomplish that objective, a pilot study was conducted using deserters at large from the Army. As previously stated, of the four services, only the Navy currently uses information available from credit vendors in their deserter apprehension program. Data provided by the credit vendors was compared to the information the Army DIP had in each member's file to find if there were any new leads provided concerning the deserter's present locale. To find out if there was "value" added by using information supplied by more than one credit vendor, apprehension files were examined to see if the information leading to apprehension was supplied by all three national credit vendors. Each vendor's information was judged for its usefulness, as measured by whether it whether it included an address lead that actually resulted in an apprehension of a deserter.

## **C. QUESTIONS**

Given the legal constraints on the use of information contained in credit reports, what credit vendor information, if any, can the Department of Defense legally use to assist in

the deserter apprehension process? As previously noted, there are currently three major credit vendors: TRW, CBI, and Trans Union (TU). Do all three supply equally useful information across the country or do they have regional areas of strength and weaknesses? Which of the three vendors provided the information that lead to the most apprehensions? Can cost savings or other efficiencies for the Department of Defense be realized by using information from more than one credit vendor?

#### **D. SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS**

This study is limited to the examination of 2,199 U.S. Army deserter records provided by the DIP at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. To stay within legal constraints, only name and address information was acquired from the three credit vendors. A computer literature search was performed on Dialog and DLSIE using the key words, "Deserter, Unauthorized Absentee, and Absent Without Leave (AWOL)." Studies not referenced by those databases or not falling under the key words utilized did not come to the attention of the author.

#### **E. METHODOLOGY**

All of the data used to conduct this study was supplied by the U.S. Army Deserter Information Point (USADIP), Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana. The primary identities were the

names and social security numbers of the 2,199 deserters identified by the USADIP. A questionnaire was used to help compare the deserter's addresses previously noted in each member's records to the address leads provided by the credit vendors. The information in the deserters' records was matched separately for each vendor using the deserter's social security number and name to ensure that the address information corresponded to the right individual. A new address lead match occurred whenever a credit vendor supplied an address that was not already contained in the member's desertion packet at the DIP. The total number of address lead matches provided by each vendor was identified. All of the new address leads were used by DIP when attempting to locate each of the deserters. The new address lead matches were compared to those supplied by the other two vendors to find out whether that address information was available from more than one of the sources. Matches leading directly to a member returning to military custody were identified as to its particular vendor source. The questionnaire used to gather the aforementioned data is shown in Appendix A and explained in Chapter IV.

#### **F. DEFINITIONS**

Absentee. Any member of the Armed Forces not classified administratively as a deserter who is absent without authority

from his or her unit, organization, or other place of duty at which he or she is required to be.[Ref. 5]

Credit Vendor (Consumer Reporting Agency). Any entity that engages in the practice of assembling or evaluating consumer credit information or other information on consumers so consumer reports can be given to third parties.[Ref. 6]

Deserter. A member of the Armed Forces who has been administratively classified as a deserter. Within the Department of Defense policy are three separate criteria that cause an absentee to be administratively classified as a deserter:

1. Without regard to the length of absence, the facts and circumstances of absence indicate the member committed the offense of desertion as defined in the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) and the Manual for Courts-Martial.
2. The member has been absent without leave for thirty consecutive days.
3. The member requests, applies for, or accepts any type of asylum or residence permit in a foreign country while absent without authority in that country. There is no regard to the length of absence in this criteria.[Ref. 1]

Desertion. The UCMJ definition of desertion is found in Article 85. Its definition applies to either "any member" or "commissioned officer" of the armed forces. Any member is guilty of desertion--if that member without authority goes or remains absent from his organization or place of duty with intent to remain away permanently; or quits his organization or place of duty with intent to avoid hazardous duty or shirk important service; or without being separated from the armed

forces enlists or accepts an appointment in the same or another armed force or enters a foreign armed service except when authorized by the United States. In addition to the above, the commissioned officer is also guilty of desertion if after tendering his resignation and before notice of its acceptance, he quits his post or proper duties with intent to remain away permanently.[Ref. 5]

Deserter Under Aggravated Circumstances. Those cases of desertion where the individual is an officer, is wanted for selected offenses punishable under the Uniform Code of Military Justice or has had access to classified defense information which, if disclosed, could jeopardize the security interests of the United States.[Ref. 5]

Return to Military Control. The date and hour:

- a. An absentee or deserter surrenders to, is delivered to, or is apprehended by or for military authorities, or
- b. A civilian authority holding the absentee or deserter for some reason other than at the request of the military informs the military of his or her availability; or
- c. An absentee or deserter otherwise comes under the control of military personnel.[Ref. 1]

## **II. BACKGROUND**

After a member is administratively classified as a deserter, each service is required to enter the deserter information into the FBI National Crime Information Center (NCIC) computer database. A Deserter Information Point has been established within each service to act as the "clearing house" within the each Military Service for deserters. Members of the Armed Forces may apprehend deserters under certain circumstances prescribed in the Uniform Code of Military Justice. Civil authorities may also apprehend military deserters. The authority for civil authorities to apprehend deserters is found in United States Code Title 10. Specifically in Section 808 Of Title 10, "any civil officer having authority to apprehend offenders under the laws of the United States or of a State, Territory, Commonwealth, or possession, or the District of Columbia may summarily apprehend a deserter from the armed forces and deliver him into the custody of those forces." [Ref. 5] The services are to forward any leads developed pertaining to the location of deserters to the appropriate civil law enforcement authorities who will be asked to help in the return of the service member to military control. No credit vendor database information is currently used by the Army for leads to locating deserters. The Navy uses only CBI's information in its apprehension



program. The Air Force and Marines do not routinely use any credit vendor database information. The military services are responsible for sustaining a level of coordination with civilian law enforcement agencies to promote their active participation in this program. Upon apprehension by civil authorities, the military shall try to return the absentee to military control within forty-eight hours of being notified.

### **III. LAWS, DIRECTIVES, AND INSTRUCTIONS REVIEW**

The offense of desertion is defined in Title 10 of the United States Code. Title 10 contains the Uniform Code of Military Justice (UCMJ) within its sections. Article 85 of the UCMJ specifically defines desertion (shown in the previous definition's chapter) for the Armed Forces of the United States. The law also requires that each member of the Armed Forces shall have the article on desertion carefully explained to them when they enter the service, after completing six months of service, and at the time a member reenlists. Section 956 of Title 10 permits Department of Defense appropriated funds to be used for expenses for apprehension and delivery of deserters, including payments of rewards not to exceed \$75 for apprehensions.

Administrative policy on deserters for the Department of Defense (DOD) is set forth in DOD Directive Number 1325.2, Desertion and Unauthorized Absence. This directive applies by agreement to the Coast Guard as well as to the Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marines. Each service carries out the DOD Directive using its own policies, regulations, and instructions that are based upon the DOD Directive. DOD and individual service regulations and instructions are for administrative purposes only. Legal charges are based on United States Code, Title 10.

Also found within United States Code is Title 15 Section 1681b concerning the permissible purposes of consumer reports. Although the release of consumer reports to governmental agencies is not specifically addressed in Section 1681b, Section 1681f does address disclosure of address lead information to governmental agencies. Section 1681f states,

a consumer reporting agency may furnish identifying information respecting any consumer, limited to his name, address, former addresses, places of employment, or former places of employment, to a governmental agency. [Ref. 6]

Based on this statement the use of specific and limited credit vendor information to locate deserters from the Department of Defense is permissible by law.

This chapter has encompassed the legal basis for the offense of desertion and current surrounding policies. The next chapter describes the questionnaire used in the study and the results it produced.

#### **IV. METHODOLOGY AND DATA**

##### **A. INTRODUCTION**

The U.S. Army Deserter Information Point (USADIP) at Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana was chosen as the research site for this study. The USADIP provided the names and social security numbers of all 2,199 Army deserters who were at-large on December 8, 1992. The total number of deserters-at-large is in a constant state of flux. On any given day some deserters may be arrested or turn themselves in, while other AWOL personnel may be declared deserters. A chart in Appendix B shows the number of deserters-at-large in the Department of Defense from fiscal years 1985 to 1991.

Each of the 2,199 deserters were identified by name and social security number. This information was forwarded by the U.S. Army to three credit vendors--TRW, CBI, and Trans Union (TU)--for matching with their databases. A paper printout was produced for each vendor showing the deserter's name and social security number along with any address lead information contained in their database. If a social security number was linked to a different name than the name provided by the USADIP, the accompanying name and address information was also provided on the printout.

The printouts were compared against the individual deserter packets to decide if all of the address lead information provided by the credit vendor was already contained in the file. To facilitate the recording of this information, a questionnaire (shown in Appendix A) was filled out for each deserter. The structure and content of the questionnaire filled out by personnel at the USADIP is described in the following paragraphs.

#### **B. QUESTIONNAIRE STRUCTURE**

Question number one reads, "Is member a special category? Yes\_\_ No\_\_, if yes, what category?\_\_\_\_" Only two special categories were used. They were:

1. DVIS-II, a person that deserted from the Army during the Viet Nam era.
2. DEFECTOR, a person that sought political asylum in a foreign country whether the country is friendly or hostile, and voluntarily resides in a foreign country whether the country is friendly or hostile.

Question number two reads, "Total number of addresses provided by the following vendors: TRW#\_\_ CBI#\_\_ Trans Union (TU)#\_\_." This question simply asks for the total number of address leads provided by each vendor. This question does not screen or qualify what the address must be other than if two exactly the same addresses were printed out from the vendor, they would be counted as only one address.

Question number three reads, "Does name provided coincide with deserter packet (yes or no)? (If all responses are no, questionnaire is complete). TRW\_\_ CBI\_\_ TU\_\_." This question begins to qualify the addresses provided by the credit vendors. It is asking whether the name provided by the credit vendor matches the name provided by the Army from the deserter record. One of the reasons for the names not matching is that the deserter was a female who married and changed her last name. There were also instances of individuals using social security numbers other than their own. If the name provided did not match the packet, the questionnaire was continued only if the persons completing the questionnaire felt there was some link between the credit vendor information and the information contained in the deserter packet on the service member.

Question number four reads, "All address information provided by credit vendor is already available in member's packet: Yes\_\_ (if yes, questionnaire is complete) No\_\_ (if no, continue). a. Total addresses of credit vendor different than member's packet/addresses common to other vendor(s): TRW#\_\_ TRW/CBI#\_\_ TRW/TU#\_\_, CBI#\_\_ CBI/TRW#\_\_ CBI/TU#\_\_, TU#\_\_ TU/TRW#\_\_ TU/CBI#\_\_." If there were no addresses different from the deserter's packet, the questionnaire is complete. The first part of the question inquired whether all the information supplied by the credit vendor was already in the deserter's file. The second portion of the question

inquired how many addresses provided by the credit vendor were different from the member's record and if the addresses were unique or common to those provided by the other two vendors.

Question number five reads, "Information from following vendor provided positive lead on member: (N) - Name, (A) - Address, (B) - Both, TRW\_\_ CBI\_\_ TU\_\_." This question further qualifies the address information the vendor provided. Here "name" refers to potential alias names the vendor may have provided.

Question number six reads, "Member has additional military charges: Yes\_\_ No\_\_ ." This specifically refers to military charges that are recorded in the member's packet at the USADIP at the time of the questionnaire was completed on that member.

Question number seven reads, "Address from following vendor used to apprehend member. TRW\_\_ CBI\_\_ TU\_\_." After vendor supplied address lead information was judged to be different from that available in the member's desertion packet, the address and/or name information was forwarded from USADIP to the appropriate civilian authority for potential apprehension. If there was an apprehension or action resulting in the member returning to the military, the appropriate vendor was credited with providing that information. If the same information was provided by more than one vendor, each vendor providing the information was given credit.

Question number eight reads, "Zip code that member was located in upon apprehension (use only 5 digit zip code)." When service member apprehensions occurred that were directly attributable to information provided by one or more credit vendor. The zip code was entered where the deserter was located at the time of apprehension.

Question number nine reads, "Subject has been returned to military custody code:\_\_\_\_ ." Besides the service members being returned to military custody due to information provided by credit vendors, there were also members who returned to the military after the member information was sent to the credit vendors, but before working on the questionnaire. Other members were returned to military custody after the questionnaire was being worked on, but not because of the address lead information supplied by the credit vendors. An example of a situation falling in this category would be if the deserter was apprehended during a routine traffic stop due to information on the National Criminal Information Computer (NCIC). Deserter information is routinely entered in the NCIC database whenever a member is declared a deserter as required by Department of Defense policy.

### **C. CATEGORIES OF DESERTERS**

A brief description of the different categories of deserters included in the Army population studied is presented in the following paragraphs. The analysis of the primary



research questions addressed by this study appears in the next chapter.

There was a total of 2,199 deserters-at-large at the beginning of the study. As deserters were returned to military custody, they were placed in three categories as previously discussed. This study assumed that the procedures and policies of the Department of Defense on deserters were operating according to current directives prior to the study. Such policies include forwarding a deserter's information to the National Criminal Investigative Computer (NCIC) network. It is assumed that upon receiving updated information from the NCIC the civilian authorities took the appropriate action with respect to the applicable United States laws. Within the three categories of deserters returned to military custody, this study focused on the deserters returned directly attributable to credit vendor supplied information. The other two categories of returned deserters were excluded from further analysis.

Of the total number of deserters, 119 of the deserters were on administrative hold. This group includes cases that were being held for correction of a deserter's documentation and/or incomplete documentation. The first category of returned deserters contained 296 deserters that were returned to military custody (RMC) before using any credit vendor information to locate the member. As each questionnaire was completed using information found in the member's packet, a

control date was assigned. The deserters returned to military custody prior to the control date recorded on the questionnaire were not included in the analysis. The second category of returned deserters contained 50 who were returned to military custody (RMC) after the control date found on the questionnaire but the cause for apprehension was unrelated to the credit vendor (CV) information. This category includes deserters apprehended through a check of the NCIC while being detained for traffic stops or arrests due to civilian charges. The third category of returnees and the focus of this study contained 135 members who were returned to military custody (RMC) as a direct result of the address leads supplied by the credit vendors. Subtracting the above numbers from the beginning total gives a total of 1,598 deserters-at-large left at the end of this study as shown in Table I.

TABLE I - U.S. ARMY DESERTERS AT THE BEGINNING OF THE STUDY

<b>Deserters at Large Beginning</b>	<b>2,199</b>
RMC Prior to Study	296
RMC Not Due to CV Info	50
RMC Due to CV Info	135
<b>Deserters at Large Final</b>	<b>1,598</b>

As previously noted, however, the actual number of deserters in the Army is constantly fluctuating because of new desertions. The precise number is unimportant for purposes of the study and the figure of 1,598 is shown here only to provide the reader with an idea of the magnitude of the problem and to help gauge the relative proportions of the different categories of deserters occurring in the Army.

The groups of deserters other than those returned to military custody due to credit vendor information, were examined because they were of interest to the USADIP. Those groups are discussed here. Of the 2,199 deserters, 165 were in special categories as defined by the USADIP. The 165 broke into the two subcategories of defectors and Viet Nam era (DVIS-II) deserters. Thirty-six deserters were in the defector subcategory. The credit vendor database search provided no address or name information that was not already on file for the defectors. The remaining 129 were in the DVIS-II subcategory. Of the 129 member DVIS-II group, six deserters (21 percent) had address or name information provided by the credit vendors and two of those six deserters were returned to military custody directly attributable to the credit vendor information.

Fifty (2.27 percent) of the 2,199 deserters had additional military charges on file in their packet at the USADIP. During the study, 13 of those fifty deserters (26

percent) were returned to military custody. Further analysis of the 13 with additional military charges indicated three deserters (6 percent) were returned before the questionnaire was completed and one (2 percent) was returned due to other circumstances not attributable to the credit vendor information. Nine of the remaining 46 returnees (20 percent) were returned directly because of the credit vendor address lead information. Of the nine deserters returned based on credit vendor address lead information, two were provided uniquely from TRW, two were uniquely provided from CBI, and the remaining five were apprehended based on information provided by two or more of the three vendors.

For each deserter returned due to credit vendor address lead information, the zip code where the deserter was apprehended was recorded. The break down of those numbers is presented in Appendix C. TRW provided information on 93 of the returned deserters (69 percent). Fourteen (10 percent) of the 93 were exclusive to TRW. CBI had information on 106 (79 percent) of the 135 returned deserters and 29 (21 percent) of those were unique to CBI. TU contributed information on 75 (56 percent) of the returnees with four (3 percent) being unique to TU. Once again, the unique credit vendor address lead information was provided by only one vendor. The next section presents the results pertaining to the principal research questions.

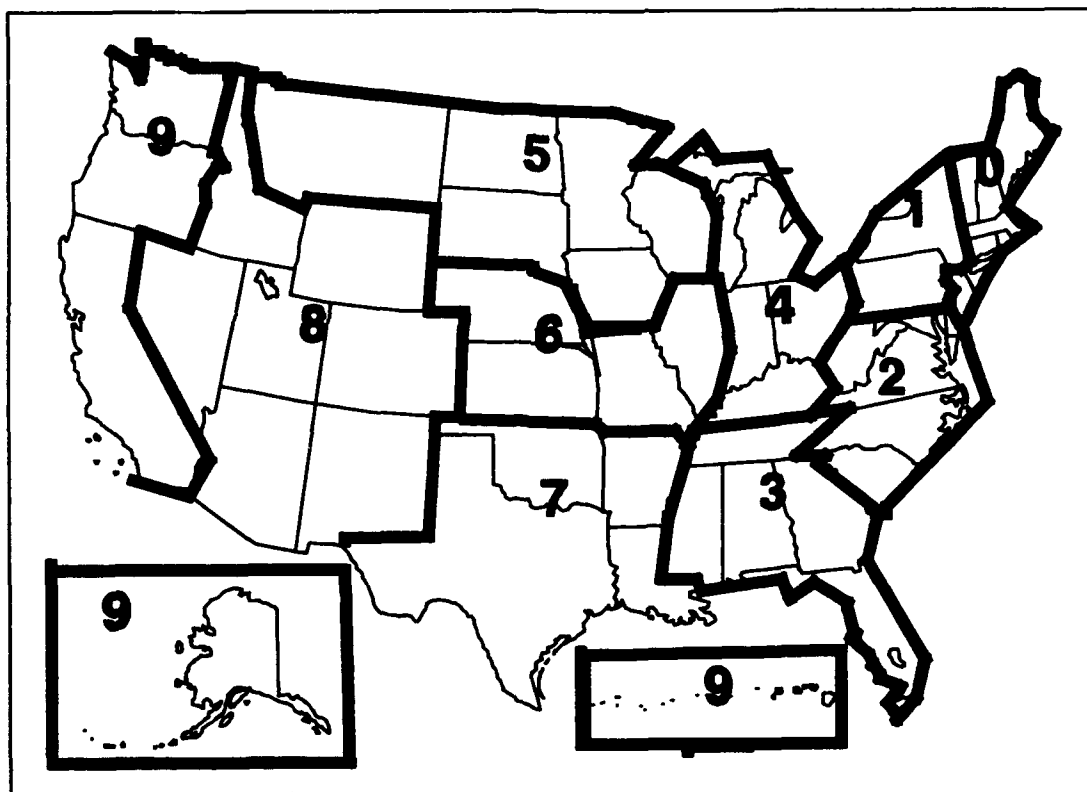
## **V. RESULTS**

This study sought to determine if address leads acquired from vendors could be used by the United States Army Deserter Information Point to help locate and apprehend deserters. It was assumed that if there is utility in using this information for the U.S. Army that the information will also have value locating deserters from the other three services.

Of the initial survey population of 2,199 deserters, 415 were excluded from the analysis because they were either on administrative hold or apprehended before USADIP attempted to utilize the address leads. This reduced the total study population to 1,784. The first address leads were processed by the USADIP on January 28, 1993, and the last ones processed on April 13, 1993. Although it is recognized that additional apprehensions may result from the credit vendor address lead information, a cutoff date of May 13, 1993, was selected. Any deserters apprehended after that date were not included in the computations contained in this study. Fifty out of 1,784 deserters (2.8 percent) were returned to military custody during the duration of the study due to causes other than obtaining the credit vendor information. The causes for the apprehension of the 50 returnees were not obtained nor analyzed for this study. Credit vendor address lead information accounted for 135 members who were returned to

military control which constituted 7.6 percent of the eligible study population. The subset of total returnees that can be directly attributed to credit vendor information is further examined in the following paragraphs.

The location of apprehension for the 135 returnees was recorded on the study questionnaire. The first digit of the zip code in the United States divides the country into ten regions as shown in Figure 1. The lowest number zip codes are

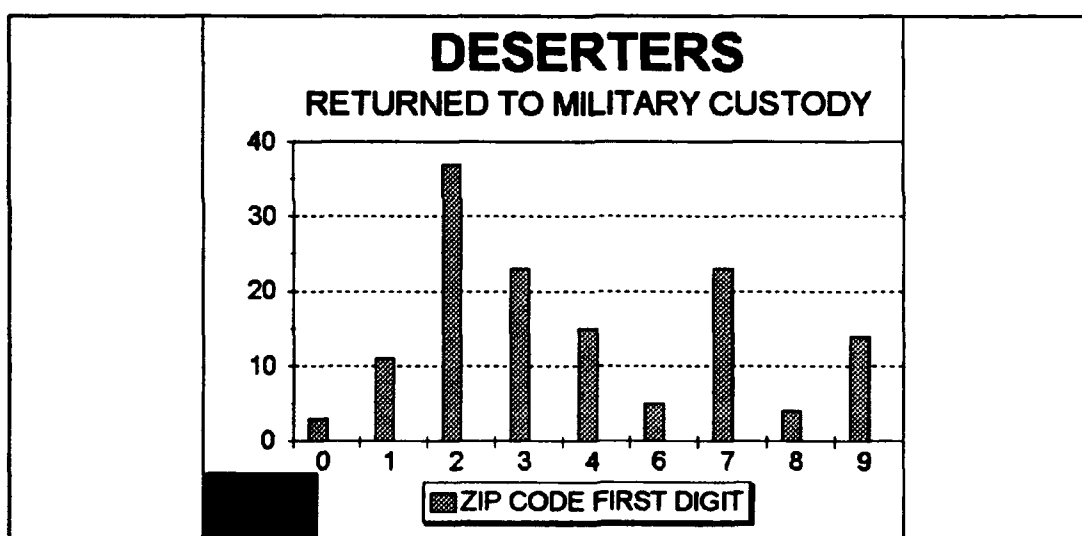


**Figure 1** - First Digit of Zip Code

found in the northeastern continental United States and progress sequentially as one goes further west. Figure 1

depicts the areas covered by each of the ten digits (0 to 9) that can appear as the first digit of a zip code.

Of the 135 deserters returned due to the credit vendor information, there were no returnees from the zip code beginning with the number five. The distribution of the deserters among the apprehension zip codes is shown in Figure 2. Twenty-seven percent of the 135 returnees were apprehended in locations where the zip code began with the number two. The locations where the zip codes began with three and seven were next, each produced 17 percent of the total returnees.



**Figure 2** - Distribution of Apprehensions Within First Digit of Zip Code

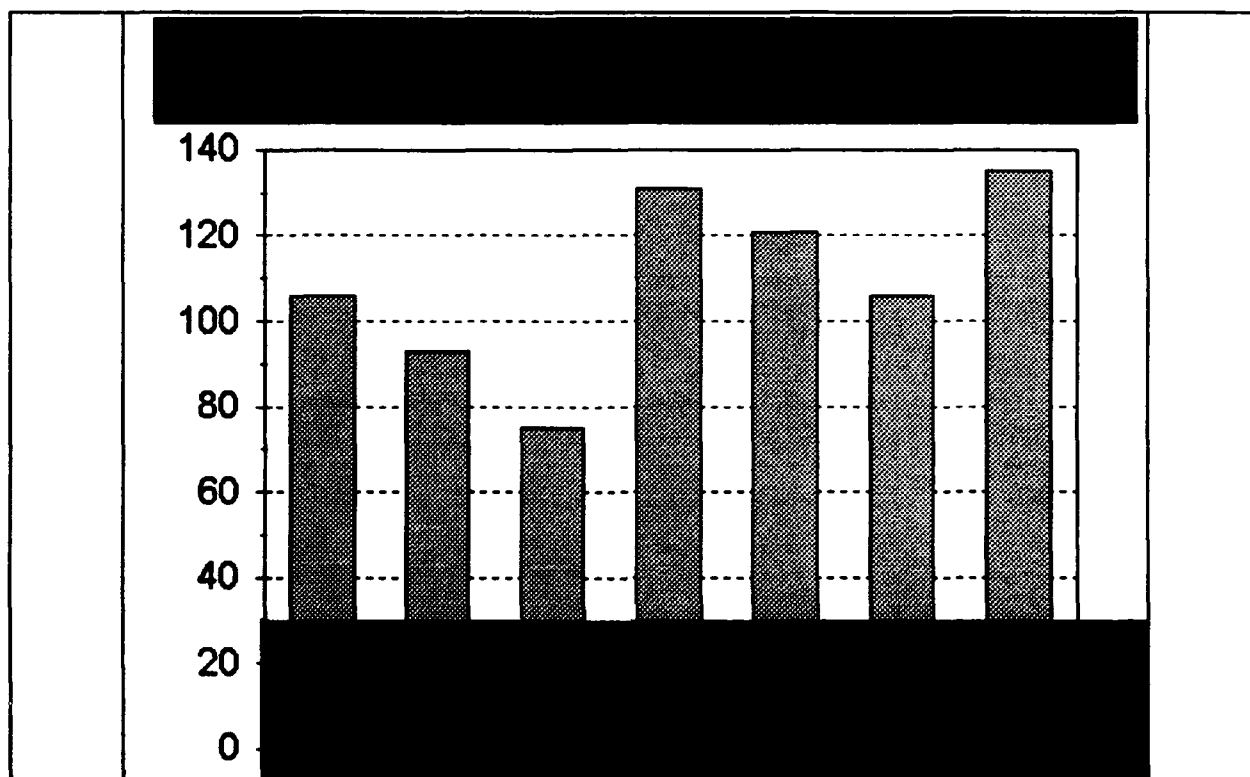
A breakdown of the 135 returned deserters by both apprehension location and the vendor supplying the address lead is presented in Appendix C. CBI provided information leading to the largest number of apprehensions. One hundred six returnees could have been located if CBI was the only

vendor used. CBI was the only vendor who supplied address lead information on 29 of the returnees. TRW was next with correct address lead information on 92 of those apprehended, including 14 whose leads were unique to TRW. TU provided address leads resulting in 75 apprehensions of which four were unique. Figure 3 shows what the apprehensions would have been from the study results had various vendor combinations been used.

When one compares the distributions reported in Appendix C with the zip codes shown in Figure 1, the relative strengths and weaknesses that the credit vendors have in different geographic regions of the United States become apparent. For example, in zip codes beginning with three, CBI had the address lead information on 22 out of the 23 deserters who were apprehended in that region and supplied unique information on 11 of the 23. This area covers the southeastern United States and is the location of CBI's corporate headquarters. TU is based in Chicago, Illinois. Their traditionally strongest area - Illinois, Wisconsin, and Michigan - was broken up into three different zip code regions which makes it difficult to assess their strength in the Midwest. TRW is based in California. It was the strongest vendor in regions six, seven, eight and nine, which covered the sections of the United States west of the Mississippi River where deserters were found.



Of the total of 135 deserters returned to military custody, the credit vendors supplied information on the following number of returnees: TRW provided information on 93



**Figure 3 - Deserters Apprehended If Vendor or Vendor Combinations Were Used In Study**

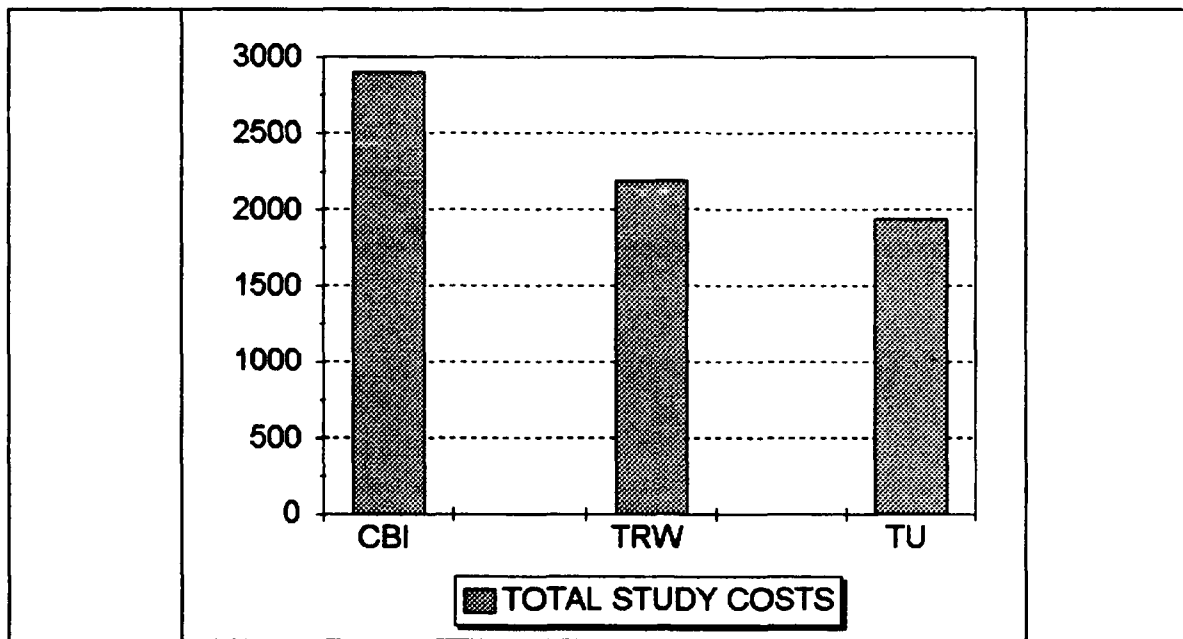
deserters, CBI provided information on 106, and TU provided information on 75. Figure 6 illustrates a breakdown of the 135 apprehensions by credit vendor providing the address lead information. Sixty-five percent of the apprehensions had information that was common to two or more credit vendors. CBI was the only vendor supplying information on 21 percent of the apprehensions, TRW the only vendor on 10 percent, and TU the only vendor on 3 percent.

TABLE II - VENDOR PROVIDING ADDRESS LEAD FOR RETURNEES.

VENDORS	RETURNEES	% OF TOTAL
CBI	106	78.5%
TRW	93	68.9%
TU	75	55.5%
CBI & TRW	131	97.0%
CBI & TU	121	89.6%
TRW & TU	106	78.5%
CBI & TRW & TU	135	100%

Table II approaches the numbers on deserters returned to military custody by the vendors from a different angle. It shows that if USADIP chose to use information from CBI, the number of returnees would have been 106 vice the 135 returnees using all three vendors. With only TRW and CBI information used, the number of returnees would have increased to 131. Therefore, it can be concluded that there was a positive return gained through adding the TRW information due to its nationwide coverage. For the U.S. Army, using both CBI and TRW address lead information (as shown in Figure 4) appears to

be the best combination. Although four returnees would have



**Figure 4** Credit Vendor Study Costs

been missed without using the TU information, the 28 percent added cost reflected in this study diminishes the positive return to some extent.

The total number of deserters apprehended as a result of address leads supplied from the credit vendors includes each vendor's unique information plus information that was common to one or more of the other two vendors used in this study. CBI supplied information on 79 percent of the returnees, TRW supplied information on 69 percent, and TU provided information on 56 percent. There is a cost associated with each set of information provided by a credit vendor as shown in Table III and the following paragraphs explain some of those costs.

TABLE III - VENDOR COSTS VERSUS RETURNED DESERTERS

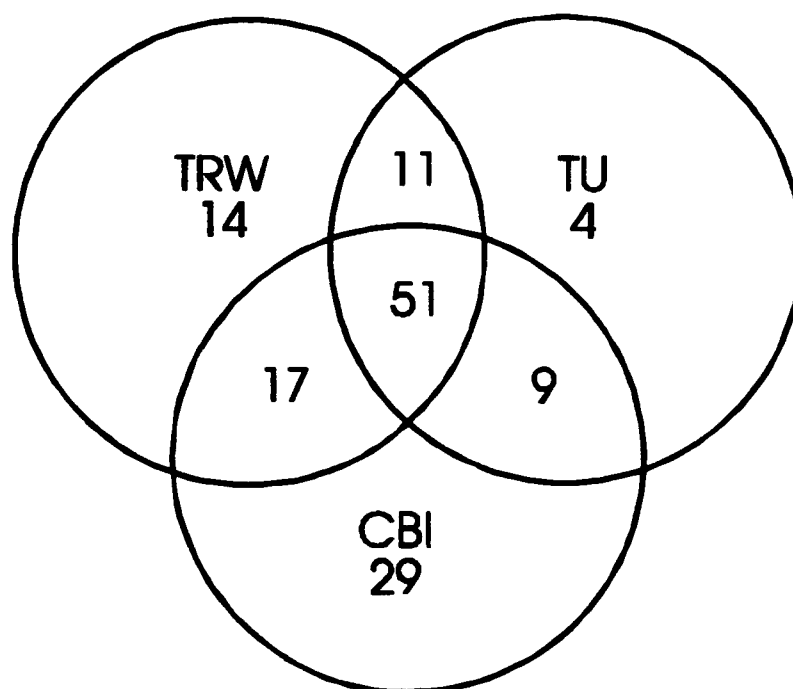
VENDOR	STUDY COST	RETURNEES (INCLUDES DUPLICATES)	COST PER RETURNEE
TRW	\$2195.00	93	\$23.60
CBI	\$2898.17	106	\$27.34
TU	\$1939.30	75	\$25.86
TOTALS	\$7032.47	135	\$52.09

Although specific costs will vary with time and the type of service contracted for, the actual costs for the address information at the time of this study are shown here as a basis for comparison. CBI, also known as Equifax Info Services, of 1600 Peachtree Street Northwest, Atlanta, Georgia, 30309, was available at the time of the study on a General Services Administration contract (GS00FX1806A). Their price estimates for the service of tape-to-tape profile providing an address verification report were \$2.26 per record for a match and \$1.00 per record for a nonmatch. The total CBI costs for this study were \$2898.17. TRW Credit Data Division of 770 Tamalpais Drive, Corte Madera, California, 94925, was also available on a General Services Administration contract (GS00F1804A) at the time of this study. Their price

for the services was \$1.10 per record for their address verification report. The total TRW charges for this study were \$2195.00. Trans Union was not under General Services Administration contract at the time of this study. Their charge for providing address information was \$1.30 per record with a match and \$.50 per record without a match. Trans Union study costs were \$1939.30. Figure 4 shows the credit vendor costs for this study. The total cost of \$7,032.47 equates to \$52.09 spent for the 135 deserters who were returned to military custody. As stated in a previous paragraph, a 1976 Air Force Military Personnel Center study showed fiscal year 1975 absentee and deserter costs to be \$321 per capita.[Ref. 3:p. 9] Based on the cost of \$7,032 for the credit vendor information and the 1975 Air Force costs per capita for deserters, the credit vendor information presents an annual cost savings to the government of approximately \$36,000 by returning deserters to military custody. This dollar figure is not adjusted for the inflation that occurred since the 1975 Air Force deserter expenses to the government were calculated.

This section has presented the results of the study. The discussion, conclusions, and recommendations based on those results is presented in the next section.

**Venn diagram of apprehensions by vendor leads**



**Figure 5** - One Hundred Thirty-Five Deserter Apprehensions Broken Down by Credit Vendor Provining Address Lead Information

## **VI. DISCUSSIONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

Deserters will remain a problem as long as there are militaries. There is utility in using information available in credit vendor databases in order to locate and apprehend deserters from the United States Armed Services. Can the Department of Defense legally use address information available from credit vendors? Without any further qualifications, Section 1681f. which is titled Disclosures to government agencies of Title 15 of U.S. Code permits name, address, former addresses, places of employment, or former places of employment, to be given to government agencies. As previously noted, by meeting specific criteria of Section 1681b of Title 15, the consumer reporting agency may furnish a full consumer report. Based on this study's results, name and address information in many cases is sufficient for the purpose of locating deserters from the Department of Defense.

One hundred thirty-five deserters were returned to military custody within the limited time of this study. From the unique information leading to an apprehension, an increase in number of deserters returned to military custody of approximately 50 percent was seen by using address leads supplied by two vendors instead of just one (i.e., CBI and TRW versus only CBI). Therefore, it is recommended that the Army use the two major credit vendors, CBI and TRW, to provide

location information to assist in the apprehension of deserters. Each of the credit vendors provides a nationwide service and appears to have individual strengths and weaknesses within geographic regions. Whether the two vendors selected for the Army will also adequately cover the geographical area pertinent for Navy, Marine, or Air Force deserters is unknown.

Apprehending deserters using credit vendor information is more cost efficient and effective for the U.S. Army when compared to the methods currently in use. It is recommended that once a deserter is reported to the DIP, that the service wait for a period of three to six months prior to requesting credit vendor address lead information in order to allow any potential new address leads to appear in credit vendor databases. After the initial request, information should be requested as a followup at some regular interval (e.g., twelve months) after the initial check. It is recommended DIP's monitor the effectiveness of the selected interval in order to determine the most effective and efficient time frames for rechecking credit vendor databases for address lead information.

During the study, certain details of the process of apprehending the deserter with the credit vendor information were outside the scope of control of the principal participants conducting the study. Those uncontrollable items were items such as, did all police departments devote the same



effort to the attempted apprehension upon receiving the information from the USADIP; did the police departments treat this information the same as the information used under the current policies such as the NCIC; and as previously mentioned, has the Department of Defense practice of entering the deserter's information into the NCIC operated according to the intended policies? This study did not examine the possible effects that either the period during which a service member deserted or the location from which the member deserted may have on locating that member. It also did not consider the effects any personal attributes of the service member such as sex, age, race, or pay grade may have on the location ability of credit vendors to provide useful address leads.

Utilizing credit vendor databases for address lead information to assist in locating and apprehending deserters is more cost effective and efficient than methods currently in use. The relatively small costs of this type of program, which at a minimum are personal computer software costs and credit vendor database query charges, are the essential ingredients to its success. One hundred thirty-five deserters were returned to military custody as a direct result of the credit vendor address lead information.

**APPENDIX A**

control number\_\_\_\_\_

control date\_\_\_\_\_

**CREDIT VENDOR DATABASE**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

LAST NAME:\_\_\_\_\_FIRST NAME:\_\_\_\_\_MI:\_\_\_\_\_

SSN: \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_

1. IS MEMBER SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES? YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_ (IF YES, WHAT CATEGORY: \_\_\_\_\_ )

2. TOTAL NUMBER OF ADDRESSES PROVIDED BY THE FOLLOWING VENDORS: TRW #\_\_\_\_\_ CBI #\_\_\_\_\_ TRANS UNION (TU) #\_\_\_\_\_

3. DOES NAME PROVIDED COINCIDE WITH DFR PACKET (YES OR NO)? (IF ALL RESPONSES ARE NO, QUESTIONNAIRE IS COMPLETE).

TRW \_\_\_\_\_ CBI \_\_\_\_\_ TU \_\_\_\_\_

4. ALL ADDRESS INFORMATION PROVIDED BY CREDIT VENDOR IS ALREADY AVAILABLE IN MEMBER'S PACKET: YES \_\_\_\_\_ (if yes, questionnaire is complete) NO \_\_\_\_\_ (if no, continue).

a. TOTAL ADDRESSES OF CREDIT VENDOR DIFFERENT THAN MEMBER'S PACKET/ADDRESSES COMMON TO OTHER VENDOR(s):

CBI#\_\_\_\_\_ TRW#\_\_\_\_\_ TRW#\_\_\_\_\_

TRW #\_\_\_\_\_ CBI #\_\_\_\_\_ TU #\_\_\_\_\_

TU#\_\_\_\_\_ TU#\_\_\_\_\_ CBI#\_\_\_\_\_

5. INFORMATION FROM FOLLOWING VENDOR PROVIDED POSITIVE LEAD  
ON MEMBER: (N) - NAME(A) - ADDRESS(B) - BOTH

TRW \_\_\_\_\_ CBI \_\_\_\_\_ TU \_\_\_\_\_

6. MEMBER HAS ADDITIONAL MILITARY CHARGES: YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO \_\_\_\_\_

-----FOLLOWUP INFORMATION-----

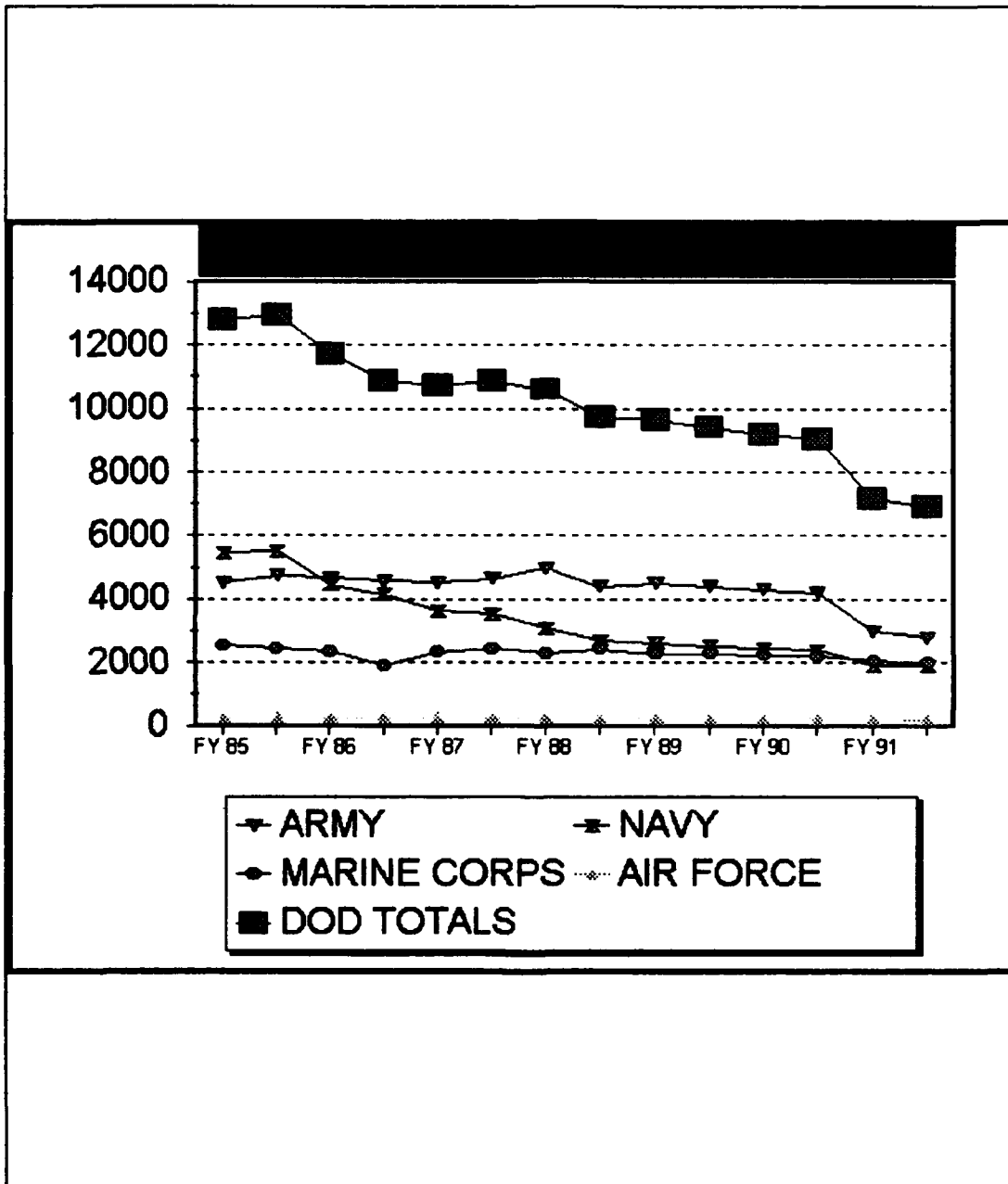
7. ADDRESS FROM FOLLOWING VENDOR USED TO APPREHEND MEMBER.

TRW \_\_\_\_\_ CBI \_\_\_\_\_ TU \_\_\_\_\_

8. ZIP CODE MEMBER LOCATED IN UPON APPREHENSION (use only 5  
digit zip code): \_ \_ \_ \_ \_ .

9. SUBJECT HAS BEEN RETURNED TO MILITARY CUSTODY CODE: \_\_\_\_\_.

# APPENDIX B



## APPENDIX C

## DESERTERS RETURNED

**DUE TO CREDIT VENDOR INFORMATION**

### ZIP CODE ANALYSIS

	ZIP CODE FIRST DIGIT									TOTAL UNIQUE	TOTAL FROM
	0	1	2	3	4	6	7	8	9	TO VENDOR	VENDOR
CREDIT VENDOR	(of possible 135)									(of possible 135)	
TRW UNIQUE	0	2	3	0	1	2	3	1	2	14	TRW
TRW TOTAL	3	7	28	9	11	4	18	4	9		93
CBI UNIQUE	0	2	5	11	3	1	2	0	5	29	CBI
CBI TOTAL	2	8	30	22	13	2	17	3	9		106
TU UNIQUE	0	1	0	1	0	0	2	0	0	4	TU
TU TOTAL	3	6	26	10	8	1	14	1	6		75
	80										
TOTAL RMC'S	3	11	37	23	15	5	23	4	14	135	
PER ZIP CODE											

# APPENDIX D

CREDIT VENDOR	TOTAL STUDY COSTS	RMC 'S	UNIQUE RMC'S
CBI	\$2,898.17	106	\$27.34 29
TRW	\$2,195.00	93	\$23.60 14
TU	\$1,939.30	75	\$25.86 4

TOTAL RMC COST PER RMC

INCLUDES DUPESFOR STUDY

TOTAL COST	\$7,032.47	135	\$52.09
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1. U.S. Department of Defense, Desertion and Unauthorized Absence, DoD Directive 1325.2, 20 August 1979.
2. Grainfield, Gary R., and Sublett, Collier M., Study on the Apprehension of Military Deserters During Peacetime in an All-Volunteer Force, Final Report, Human Resources Division, Combat Developments Directorate, United States Army Administration Center, Fort Benjamin Harrison, Indiana, December 1977.
3. Cochran, James E., Absentees/Deserters: Can We More Effectively Manage the Problem, Student Research Report, Air Command and Staff College, Air University, Maxwell Air Force Base, Alabama, 1979.
4. Department of Defense, Report of Unauthorized Absence and Desertion, Defense Manpower Data Center, Monterey, California. (Information required by Ref. 1:p. 9).
5. United States Code, Title 10-Armed Forces, Section 808, "Apprehension of Deserters." Section 885, "Desertion." Section 886, "Absence Without Leave." Section 956, "Deserters, Prisoners, Members Absent Without Leave: Expenses and Rewards."
6. United States Code, Title 15-Commerce and Trade, Section 1681, "Congressional Findings and Statement of Purpose." Section 1681b, "Permissible Purposes of Consumer Reports." Section 1681f, "Disclosures to Governmental Agencies."
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